Certifying Official Guide

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Preface

This Guide is made available to New and Existing VA Certifying Officials by the Iowa State Approving Agency, Veterans and Military Education Section, Iowa Department of Education. An electronic copy of this guide may be obtained by visiting our website at the Iowa Department of Education.Gov

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We recommend you keep this guide as a reference.

If you have suggestions or discover errors in content, please report your suggestions to me at the Iowa State Approving Agency. My email address is: thomas.beasley@iowa.gov

If you have questions about VA policies and procedures, questions about completing any VA forms, or questions about a veteran's eligibility, please contact either VA's Education Liaison Officer for Iowa or the Iowa Department of Education's State Approving Agency. You may find our contact information on pages 35 & 36.

All questions regarding a veteran's benefit status should be directed to the US Department of Veterans Affairs at **1-888-442-4551** or e-mail VA at www.gibill.va.gov, Questions and Answers, "Ask a Question."

Responsibilities of the VA Certifying Officials

As the VA Certifying Official, you are the educational institution's representative responsible for certifying the enrollment and any changes in enrollment of students eligible for VA education benefits. The primary function is to let the VA know if a student is registered for classes in an "approved program", showing the beginning and ending dates, number of credit hours or the net amount of clock hours scheduled per week, and indicating the status of students as undergraduate or graduate, degree or non-degree, and the program the student is enrolled in. In each case, you will be responsible for reporting the accurate cost of tuition and fees for specified chapter benefits and various training times. VA benefits are paid based on the number of approved credit or clock hours they carry and, in some cases, the cost of the school they attend Certifying Officials are cautioned not to attempt to determine student's basic eligibility. Determination of eligibility and benefits is the responsibility of the VA.

Certifying Officials are responsible for assisting students in applying for educational benefits, changes in place of training, and changes in programs. Changes in enrollment and programs must be reported to the VA within 30 days of the occurrence. Certifying Officials are designated by a responsible official at each educational institution on VA Form 22-8794, Designation of Certifying Official. An educational institution may designate more than one person at the institution to be a Certifying Official. A new VA Form 22-8794 must be completed each time there is a change in Certifying Officials at an institution and forwarded to the State Approving Agency.

The Certifying Official is responsible for maintaining VA student folders. Retain a file of VA forms submitted and records of academic progress, program pursuit, and courses applicable to the student's program. Records are to be maintained for at least three years after the student's last date of attendance or longer if the school policy requires a longer period. Records are to be kept in a safe place and the student's privacy protected. Student records must be readily available to representatives of the VA and SAA.

The Certifying Official is the educational institution's representative responsible for securing approval of all programs for veterans education benefits from the State Approving Agency. Certifying Officials are also responsible for notifying the State Approving Agency of any changes in programs that may affect veterans education benefits. Certifying Officials also provide information to veterans concerning education benefits and direct veterans to other sources of veteran's information. Certifying Officials are encouraged to keep informed of VA rules and policies by referring regularly to this guide, attending VA and SAA training, enrolling in VA on-line training, and utilizing the VA "Ask A Question" Right Now Web.

VA Education Programs Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 (Chapter 33)

At the time this Guide was published, policies and rules for the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 (Chapter 33 GI Bill) had not been finalized. Information concerning the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) will be provided as a separate handout. Post-9/11 GI Bill information should be filed immediately following this page. Up-to-date information is always available at www.gibill.va.gov.

Chapter 30: Montgomery G.I. Bill—Active Duty (MGIB-AD)

Chapter 30 is the most common program. The majority of the Chapter 30 recipients receive 36 months of full-time benefits. To be eligible for education payments under MGIB-AD, veterans must possess an Honorable Discharge. Chapter 30 has four eligibility categories. Eligibility requirements are set by law and are complex. The following is a simplified list of categories. If the veteran is unsure of eligibility, they should file a claim for benefits.

- Category 1: for those who first entered active duty after June 30, 1985, and did not decline the MGIB-AD in writing upon entry into active duty.
- Category 2: for those with remaining entitlement under the Vietnam Era GI Bill.
- Category 3: for those who were involuntarily separated for certain reasons or those who were separated under the VSI or SSB program.
- Category 4: for former Veterans Education Assistance Program (VEAP) participants
 who elected to convert to the MGIB-AD during open window periods, and for a small
 group of National Guard members who were given a brief opportunity to elect the
 MGIB-AD.

Chapter 30 Kickers and Additional Contributions.

Higher monthly benefits are paid to chapter 30 participants with "kickers" and to chapter 30 participants who make additional chapter 30 payments. Veterans may have a kicker, additional contributions, or both. A kicker is part of the enlistment contract. The higher benefit rates are paid automatically when benefits are paid. Servicepersons who participate in chapter 30 pay \$1,200 towards their chapter 30 benefit. The \$1,200 is withheld from their pay during their first 12 months of service and it is **non-refundable**.

Starting 11/1/00, servicepersons may pay up to \$600 more towards chapter 30. The amount they pay is matched nine to one. A maximum \$600 contribution increases the full-time chapter 30 benefit \$150 for each month of full-time attendance.

Chapter 1606: Montgomery G.I. Bill—Selected Reserve

Educational program for active members of the Selected Reserve. Selected Reserve components include the Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, Army National Guard, and Air National Guard. The Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security (Coast Guard) determine who's eligible for chapter 1606. The Department of Veterans Affairs administers the program and pays benefits. Basic eligibility requires a six-year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve. The member must be currently and actively drilling as a satisfactory participation in the Selected Reserve. Under certain circumstances, Chapter 1607 may revert back to Chapter 1606 after separation from the Selected Reserves.

1606 Kickers: An additional amount, called a kicker, may be added to the benefit of some chapter 1606 students. The possible monthly kicker levels are \$100, \$200, and \$350. A chapter 1606 kicker may be a part of the original enlistment contract or part of a re-enlistment contract.

Chapter 1607: Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP)

Educational program for active members of the Selected Reserve called to active duty and members of the Individual Ready Reserve called to active duty in response to a contingency operation declared by the President or Congress. The Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security (Coast Guard) determine who's eligible for chapter 1607. The Department of Veterans Affairs administers the program and pay benefits. Members of the Selective Reserve may be eligible for Chapter 1607 after serving 90 consecutive days on active duty for a contingency operation. The Chapter 1607 benefit pays a percentage of the chapter 30 three-year or more rate based on the number of continuous service days on active duty: 90 days but less than one year pays 40%, one year but less than two years pays 60%, and two years pays 80% payment of the three-year rate. The 80% rate can be paid for two continuous years or, effective 1/28/08, an aggregate call-up service of three years or more.

Chapter 1607 Kicker and Additional Contributions:

A servicemember eligible for chapter 1607 who is also eligible for a chapter 1606 kicker will be paid the chapter 1606 kicker. Beginning 1/28/08 chapter 1607 reservists can participate in the "buy-up" program. They can pay up to \$600.00 to increase their monthly benefit by as much as \$150.00 per month. The reservists must be a member of a Ready Reserve component to pay the "buy-up." evert to 1606: Upon discharge from active drill status, 1607 recipients can revert back to their original Selected Reserve GI Bill – Chapter 1606. They can then use their remaining 1606 entitlement for the number of months they were activated plus four more months. Multiple periods of activation can be added together for this benefit. This benefit begins the day after the reservist is separated from their unit.

Chapter 35: Dependents Educational Assistance (DEA)

Educational Assistance paid to dependents of veterans. Persons who may be eligible are:

- A child (between ages 18 and 26, with some exceptions) of a veteran who is
 permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition; or who died in
 service; or who died of a service-connected disability; or who died while evaluated as
 having total and permanent service-connected disability; or who is listed as a POW or
 MIA.
- The surviving spouse of a veteran who died of a service-connected disability, or died in service, or died while evaluated as having total and permanent disability resulting from a service-connected disability. Surviving spouses whose benefits stopped when they remarried can receive DEA benefits again if their remarriage ends by death or divorce, or they cease to live with the person to whom they presented themselves in public as married.
- A spouse of a veteran or serviceperson who has a total and permanent disability resulting from a service-connected disability; or who is listed as a POW or MIA.
- Dependents receive up to 45 months of full-time benefits. They have a VA file or claim number (C#) that is related to the parent or spouse under who they are eligible. The dependent is identified by a suffix to the claim number (i.e., 10 or W, 41 or A, 42 or B, etc.)

Chapter 31: Vocational Rehabilitation (Voc Rehab)

A veteran may be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation (Chapter 31) benefits if he or she:

- Received, or will receive, a discharge other than dishonorable conditions;
- Incurred or aggravated a service-connected disability which entitles him or her to VA disability compensation; and
- Is in need of vocational rehabilitation because his or her disability creates an employment handicap.

Vocational rehabilitation may be provided for up to 48 months. An eligible veteran generally has 12 years from the date he or she is notified of entitlement to VA compensation to use his or her chapter 31 benefits. VA may approve an extension of time and/or length of training in certain cases. Entitlement for vocational rehabilitation services is determined on an individual basis following an evaluation of the veteran's interests, aptitudes, education, work experience, and vocational abilities.

Each school is assigned a Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist to work with chapter 31 students and to assist school officials responsible for certifying chapter 31 students. Full tuition, fees, and books are paid by the VA to the school. In addition, the student gets a subsistence allowance depending on the training status.

Benefit Payments

Benefit payments are made directly to students, unless Advance Payment is paid. The payment is made to the student for the number of days the student is certified for the month. If a student is certified for a whole month, the full monthly benefit is paid. If the student is only certified for part of the month, the benefit is prorated. VA uses a 30-day month. Divide the monthly rate by 30 to get the daily rate. Standard benefit rates can be found at Education Benefit Payment Rates. An additional kicker may be paid to some chapter 30, chapter 1606, and chapter 1607 students. If a student paid for part of a month, is subsequently certified for the next quarter or semester, VA will automatically pay the break between the quarters or semesters if Break Pay can be paid.

Retroactive Benefits

VA benefits can be paid for enrollments up to one year before the date VA receives a student's application. The date stamp put on the student's application determines the one-year date. If a student asks to be certified retroactively for enrollment periods you have not certified previously, certify the previous periods the student asks you to certify. VA will determine the date of eligibility and the beginning date from which benefits can be paid. Students may be certified retroactively for enrollment periods that were not previously certified as long as the student was enrolled in your institution. Chapter 35 retroactive benefits may be handled differently and may exceed one year. If a chapter 35 student's eligibility date is more than one year before the date VA makes the eligibility decision, then the eligibility date may be considered to be the application date if the student applies for chapter 35 within one year of the eligibility decision. Under this circumstance, retroactive benefits may be more than one year.

Change of Address and Direct Deposit

Students must keep their address and direct deposit information current. The fastest way to update an address is to use the Web-Automated Verification System (WAVE). Links to do so are on the "Main Menu" available after the student logs onto WAVE. The veteran may also call the VA at (1-888-442-4551) to update an address if WAVE is not available.

To change a direct deposit, use the Web-Automated Verification System (WAVE) or call VA (1-877-838-2778). Chapters 30, 31, 1606, and 1607 may use this number. Chapter 35 recipients do not currently have direct deposit. If a student calls to start (Chapter 30, 1606, and 1607 only) or change a direct deposit, the student should have their account information handy. The following information is needed to set up direct deposit and can be found on checks and bank statements:

- Account number
- Nine digit bank routing number
- Type of account (checking or savings)

If a student has direct deposit the student still needs to keep his or her address current because all other correspondence including award letters are mailed to the student's address. The automated functions of the verification phone server do not include changing address or starting Direct Deposit.

Advance Payment

Advance payment provides funds at the beginning of a school term to help the student meet expenses concentrated at the beginning of the term. Advance payment is the amount payable for the initial month or portion of a month the quarter or semester begins plus the amount payable for the following month. Participation in advance payment is voluntary on the part of schools and must be coordinated with the ELR. When a school participates in advance payment, students are eligible for advance payment when:

- The student requests advance pay, and
- There's more than 30 days between terms and break pay won't be paid, and
- The student is enrolled at least half-time, and
- VA receives the advance payment request at least 30 days but not more than 120 days before the enrollment period.

Create a form students can sign and date to request advance pay. If a student wants advance pay, have the student complete the form and staple it to the file copy of the Cert. If you have a signed request, check the "Advance Pay" box when you create the student's Cert for the quarter or semester for which he or she is requesting advance pay.

The Cert will be annotated with "Advance Payment Requested and Signature of Student on Record" VA Standard Remark.

Advance pay requests should be submitted 30 to 120 days before the begin date. The check will be sent to the school, payable to the student. A separate, Certification of Delivery (VA Form 22-1999V) will be sent to the school. When the check is given to the student immediately complete the Certification of Delivery (VA Form 1999v) and return it to the VA. An advance pay will pay the first and second month. The first month may be a partial month, with payment prorated for the number of days attended that month. Since the VA normally pays after a month is completed, the student will not receive another check until after the third month is completed.

Accelerated Payment (Chapter 30, 1606 & 1607)

The Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001 authorized **accelerated payment** for chapter 30 students enrolled "in certain **high cost** programs that lead to **high technology** employment in high technology industry."

The National Defense Authorization act of 2008 authorizes accelerated payment for chapter 1606 and 1607 students otherwise eligible for MGIB-SR or REAP effective 10/1/2008. Accelerated payments may be paid for non-degree programs lasting two years or less after 09/30/08. Complete information about accelerated payment is

available for students and schools on the GI Bill website (www.gibill.va.gov) under Education Benefits at: www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/acceleratedpayinfo.htm.

Acceleration Basics

Accelerated payment is a lump sum payment of 60% of tuition and fees for certain high cost, high tech programs. If there isn't enough entitlement to cover 60% of tuition and fees, VA will pay based on actual remaining entitlement. Accelerated payments are paid one semester, quarter, or term at a time. If a program isn't offered on a semester, quarter, or term basis, the accelerated payment is paid for the entire program.

High cost means tuition and fees must be more than double the chapter 30 benefit the student would otherwise receive. High technology means students must enroll in a high tech program and they must certify their intent to seek employment in a high tech industry as defined by VA. VA maintains a list of high tech programs and high tech industries on the Internet as noted in the second paragraph above. If students request accelerated payment, make sure they understand the basics described above and, if they haven't already been there, direct them to the accelerated payment link on VA's website: http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/programs.htm - Accelerated.

Certifying Accelerated Payment

If students request accelerated payment, make sure they understand the basics described above and, if they haven't already been there, direct them to the accelerated payment link on VA's website. Certify accelerated payment as you normally do, except:

- All accelerated payment certifications must be confirmed certifications. That
 means they cannot be signed, dated, and submitted until on or after the
 beginning date of the enrollment period certified.
 - Check the "Accelerated Pay (high-tech courses only)" box on a new Cert. When
 this box is checked, VA-ONCE enters "Student has requested Accelerated Pay"
 in remarks. To make this certification, you must have the student's written
 request for accelerated payment in your files for each term that accelerated
 payment was requested.
 - The student's written requests are simple. "I request accelerated payment," followed by the student's signature and the date. Obtain the request from the student, print a copy of the Cert, attach the student's request to the Cert, and keep the copy in the student's file. On the student's very first request for accelerated payment, the written request must also contain the following: "I certify that I intend to seek employment in a high technology industry as defined by VA. I have read VA's approved list of high technology industries."
 - Certify one term at a time and include the total charges (tuition and fees) for the courses certified. The student must request accelerated payment separately for each term. If the student's enrollment status changes, adjust or terminate the

Cert in the usual manner. Be sure to include tuition and fees. Mitigating circumstances may be an issue.

Break Pay

Break (Interval) pay between semesters, quarters, and terms is paid according to the rules outlined below. Breaks are paid at the rate paid on the ending date of the term preceding the break. VA pays breaks automatically unless one of the following restrictions precludes payment for the break.

Restrictions on Break Pay

- The break is more than eight weeks.
- The term before or after the break is shorter than the break.
- Training time the last day of the preceding semester, quarter, or term is less than ½-time.
- The student withdrew from all courses during the preceding semester, quarter, or term.
- The student's entitlement will exhaust and not paying the break is to the student's advantage.
- The student requests no pay for a break before payment for the break is authorized.
- The student is on active duty.

Keeping these restrictions in mind, the following summarize break pay for students who continue at the same school and for students who transfer from one school to another:

Summer Term Rule

Summer term is the whole of the period of instruction that takes place between ordinary school years. Summer term may be divided into several summer sessions. The following summarizes summer term break pay for students who continue at the same school. In all cases, the Certifying Official should report accurately the number of credits taken and the actual beginning and ending dates. The VA will compute break (interval) pay based on the enrollment certifications.

Summer Terms and Nonstandard Enrollment Periods

Standard quarters are 10 to 13 weeks in length and standard semesters are 15 to 19 weeks in length. Standard quarters and semesters generally adhere to the school's academic calendar. When courses Break more than eight weeks (56 days) Don't pay.

Same School Break doesn't exceed eight weeks **and** the terms before and after the break are not shorter than the break Pay, unless summer term rule applies.

- Change of program Don't pay
- Change School Same program Break more than 30 days Don't pay
- Break 30 days or less Pay

Break between spring and summer or between summer and fall doesn't exceed eight weeks and the terms before and after the break are not shorter than the break than Pay

- Break between two summer sessions is 30 days or less. Pay break between
 Sessions
- Break between two summer sessions is more than 30 days. Don't pay break between sessions

Certify the actual beginning dates, ending dates, and number of credits for the session or course. If several courses are nonstandard length, the different beginning and/or ending dates should be reported on separate lines, listed chronologically by beginning date. If courses have the same beginning and ending dates, their credits can be combined. VA converts credit earned during nonstandard quarters or semesters to credit hour equivalents.

Please keep in mind, VA makes the conversion, not schools. Schools must report actual credit hours and actual beginning and ending dates.

Training Time

In a standard quarter or semester, training time is measured as follows:

Undergraduate

- 12 or more credit hours is full-time
- 9-11 credit hours is \(^3\)4-time
- 6-8 credit hours is ½-time
- 4-5 credit hours is less than ½-time (<½-time)
- 1-3 credit hours is ¼-time or less

NOTE: Full-time is 13 or 14 credit hours at some schools. These schools should contact their ELR about measuring training time.

Graduate

Accredited schools report graduate (IHL-Grad) training time based on the school's academic regulations. Non-accredited schools must report graduate training time as undergraduate (IHLUndergrad).

Clock Hours

Sometimes training time is based on clock hours. If a program is measured in clock hours, benefits are paid based on clock hours of attendance per week. The beginning date, ending date, and number of clock hours a student is scheduled to attend each week must be reported. If clock hours per week vary **and** the benefit amount is affected, the variance must be reported for calendar weeks, Sunday through Saturday, between the beginning and ending dates.

Full-time measurement is 18 clock hours if classroom instruction predominates and 22 clock hours if shop practice predominates. The clock hour measurement for all

approved programs measured and paid by clock hours is listed in WEAMS (Web Enabled Approval Management System). Clock hour training time is measured as follows:

18 Hours: Theory Predominates 22 Hours: Shop/Practice Predominates

- 18 hours or more is full-time 22 hours or more is full-time
- 13-17 hours is \(^4\)-time 16-21 hours is \(^4\)-time
- 9-12 hours is \(\frac{1}{2} \)-time 11-15 hours is \(\frac{1}{2} \)-time
- 5-8 hours is less than ½-time 6-10 hours is less than ½-time
- 1-4 hours is 1/4-time or less 1-5 hours is 1/4-time or less

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees must be reported for an enrollment period when training time is less than ½-time, when accelerated payment is requested, and when the student is on active duty. The amount reported should be the **actual** amount charged the student. Report actual tuition and fee charge for the credits certified. If the actual amount is \$0.00, then \$0.00 must be reported. The benefit paid the student will reimburse tuition and fees, but cannot exceed what the student would receive if paid ½-time (4-5 standard semester or quarter credit) or ¼-time (1-3 standard credit). If you certify overlapping enrollment periods report tuition and fees for any enrollment period that is less than ½-time by itself.

STUDENT VERIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

Chapter 30, chapter 1606, and 1607 students (1607 effective 4/1/08) must verify their enrollment monthly by Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) or by Interactive Voice Response (IVR) (1-877-823-2378). The preferred method is WAVE, which includes features not in IVR. When chapter 30, 1606 and 1607 students are awarded benefits, the award letter they receive describes WAVE and IVR.

Students should verify their enrollment the last day of every month after they receive their award letter. Verification on the last day of the month is the earliest day they can verify for that month. WAVE allows students to verify their enrollment on the Internet. On the GI Bill website (www.gibill.va.gov) click the link Information for Benefit Recipients, then WAVE (https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave/index.do).

Students must be currently enrolled in an approved educational program and must have a current benefit award to use WAVE. The WAVE system permits students to perform a multitude of functions. For instance, students may:

- Verify that their enrollment has not changed
- · Report a change in their enrollment
- Change their mailing address
- Initiate or change their direct deposit information
- View their enrollment period
- · View their monthly rate

Sign up for a monthly e-mail reminder

IVR allows students to "phone in" (1-877-823-2378) their monthly verification if there are no changes to the enrollment during the previous month. If there were changes in the enrollment the student must use the WAVE system or speak with a benefits counselor at 1-888-442-4551. Currently, the monthly verification of enrollment procedure has not been adopted for chapters 35.

ENROLLMENT CERTIFICATION/APPLICATION FOR BENEFITS

VA students can submit applications online http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp.

All VA students must file an application when they first start your school. Students who have not received VA benefits before must file an original application (veterans: VA Form 22-1990; dependents: VA Form 22-5490). Students who have received VA benefits before at another institution or in an approved training program must file a *Request for Change of Program or Place of Training* (veterans: VA Form 22-1995; dependents: VA Form 22-5495).

Since the student's application forms do not include enrollment certification data, claimants should be encouraged to submit completed applications and supporting documents to the school certifying official so that the documents can be mailed and/or transmitted with the initial enrollment certification.

Original Applications

If an original application is needed do one of the following:

- If a student applied online certify the student via VA-ONCE and insert the "Student Applied Using VONAPP" VA Standard Remark.
- If the student completes and gives you an application, certify the student via VA-ONCE and mail the student's application to the Buffalo RPO. On the Cert, insert the "Application Sent Via US Mail" VA Standard Remark.

The St. Louis RPO's address is: US Department of Veterans Affairs VA Regional Office PO Box 66830 St. Louis, MO. 63166-6830

• If the student already mailed the application identifying your school as the school they will attend the VA does not need another application. Simply certify the student. If the student mailed it within the last week insert the "Application Sent Via US Mail" VA Standard Remark.

Supporting Evidence

A veteran's eligibility for education benefits cannot be determined until the VA receives satisfactory evidence of his or her active duty service. Veterans who use VA Form 22-1990 to submit their claims should attach a copy of member copy 4 of DD 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, as supporting documentation.

If member copy 4 of the DD 214 is not immediately available, the Certifying Official should not delay submission of a veteran's claim. If the DD 214 is not available, the VA will attempt to verify active duty service by alternate methods.

DD Form 2384, Selected Reserve Educational Assistance Program (GI Bill) Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE), is provided to eligible reservists by his or her Reserve or National Guard component. This is a supplementary document the reservists should submit, if available, in support of their claim to establish the date of eligibility. If a copy of the NOBE is not immediately available, the Certifying Official should not delay submission of a veteran's claim. NOBE's are only valid for the processing of claims for 120 days after the date of eligibility.

Change of Program or Place of Training

If a Request for Change of Program or Place of Training is needed get the request from the student and keep it in the student's file at your school. The student can complete a 22-1995 or 22-5495, complete a form you create for change requests, or sign and date the Cert you keep in the student's file. Whichever method is used, keep the request. Certify the student via VA-ONCE and insert the "Student's Request For Change Of Program/Place Of Training Is On File" VA Standard Remark. If the student submitted a 22-1995 or 22-5495 online, also insert the "Student Applied Using VONAPP" VA Standard Remark.

Type of Training

The types of training approved at your school can be found on your WEAMS and preset on your VAONCE site by your ELR.

- "IHL_Undergrad" (Institution of Higher Learning) for undergraduate degree programs, postbaccalaureate programs required to obtain a teacher certification or endorsement, and postbaccalaureate courses required to gain admission to a graduate degree program.
- "IHL_Grad" for graduate degrees and programs.
- "NCD" (Noncollege Degree) for certificate and diploma programs.

Name of Program

The Program of Education certified must be a degree or certificate granted by your school and approved by the Iowa State Approving Agency (SAA). Approved programs are listed in your institution's Iowa State Approving Agency approval letter and in WEAMS. Enter programs listed in WEAMS into VA-ONCE using the

Admin/Maintenance/Standard Programs. On the Bio screen, enter the name of the student's "Program" from the drop down list.

Undeclared Major

Students pursuing a bachelor's degree may not have to declare a major before their junior year at some schools. If a freshman or sophomore has not declared a major, report the student's program as "Bachelor (undeclared)". The student cannot be certified beyond his or her sophomore year unless a major is declared.

Nonmatriculated Students

VA defines matriculated as having been formally admitted to a college or university as a degree seeking student. VA educational benefits cannot be paid to nonmatriculated college or university students unless they are pending admission to your school. In that case they can be certified for two quarters or semesters. The student can be certified beyond this two-term limit only if the student is admitted to your school as a degree-seeking student, irrespective of the number of credits taken.

Certify a nonmatriculated student's program as "Bachelor (nonmatriculated)" or "Post-baccalaureate (nonmatriculated)", report prior credit as pending, and certify the student for one quarter or semester. The student can only be certified one more quarter or semester as a nonmatriculated student. The only courses you can certify for the student are those required to be admitted and those required if admitted. When a nonmatriculated student is formally admitted, the subsequent new Cert must report the student's program and credit allowed. NOTE: A student who isn't matriculated at your school may be pursuing a degree at another college or university. The two-quarter or two-semester limit doesn't apply to a Guest Student taking courses at your school that apply to a program at another school.

Leveling Courses

If a school requires a student with a bachelor's degree to pursue undergraduate courses to satisfy admission requirements for a graduate degree program (leveling), then the courses required for admission may be certified as part of that graduate degree program. In order to certify the courses, however, the following requirements must be met:

- The student must apply to the school as a graduate degree-seeking student and the student must furnish the school transcripts of all previous education and training.
- The school must determine whether the student meets its matriculation criteria.
 This process includes evaluation of prior credit. If the student cannot matriculate immediately upon enrollment, then the requirements the student must meet in order to matriculate must be identified and documented.
- If undergraduate courses are required to matriculate, the school must prepare a statement on the

school's letterhead, signed by a responsible school official—The Department Head, for example—that outlines the required undergraduate courses (identified by course number and name). This statement must be kept in the student's file.

- If the student is only certified for undergraduate courses, report training time according to undergraduate credit measurement.
- If both graduate and undergraduate course work is certified, report training time according to undergraduate or graduate measurement, whichever is greater.

Prior Training Credit Allowed

There are different prior credit procedures for accredited and non-accredited schools.

Accredited Schools

VA changed its prior credit policy for accredited schools. Accredited schools no longer have to report prior credit to the VA. They still have to evaluate prior credit, grant credit as appropriate, notify the student, and shorten the program certified accordingly. The change simply means credit evaluations no longer have to be reported to VA. Prior credit still has to be considered and benefits can't be paid more than two semesters or three quarters if prior credit isn't evaluated. VA will review credit evaluations during compliance surveys and credit evaluation records must be kept and made available to VA and SSA upon request. The VA policy with respect to program changes did not change. If a student changes program the student must request and the school must report the change to the VA. An evaluation of prior credit should be completed for the change so the certifying official can accurately track the student's program, but the prior credit does not have to be reported to the VA. The Prior Training Credit box in VA-ONCE is now NA (Not Applicable) by default and is locked (greyed out). Starting 6/18/07 all new certifications will report prior credit as NA.

Non-accredited School

A non-accredited school must report credit allowed for prior education and training on the student's initial Cert and following any change in program. Only credit that applies toward completion of the student's program should be reported as credit allowed. Use the entries in the "Prior Training Credit" drop down list as follows:

- If none, enter "None".
- If transfer credit is accepted, select "Enter # Hours" and enter the number of credit hours allowed that apply towards the student's program. Enter the number of credits that fulfill degree requirements. Don't include excessive elective credits or other credits that don't apply to the program you certified for the student.
- If credit may be allowed but hasn't been evaluated, select "**Pending**" and certify the student for one quarter or semester. When the evaluation is finished, certify the next quarter or semester and report the number of credits allowed.

- If credit evaluation isn't completed by the end of the quarter or semester, certify the student a second quarter or semester, again selecting "Pending". Education benefits can't be paid more than two semesters or three quarters unless prior credit is evaluated and reported to the VA.
- Select "Previously Submitted" for all Certs for a student continuing in the same program after credit allowed has been reported. "Previously Submitted" tells VA, "Same school, same program, new enrollment period".

Military Education and Training

Military education and training ideally should be evaluated for prior credit. Information needed to evaluate military education and training is available online.

The ACE Military Guide

The ACE Military Guide (Guide to Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services) is on the web at www.militaryguides.acenet.edu.

Military Transcripts

Information about military transcripts and how to request the transcripts is available from each branch of the military.

- Army (AARTS transcript): http://aarts.army.mil
- Navy/Marine Corps (SMART Transcript): https://www.navycollege.navy.mil/transcript.html
- Air Force (CCAF Transcript): http://www.maxwell.af.mil/au/ccaf/transcripts.asp
- Coast Guard (CGI Transcript): http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cgi

Change of Program

If a VA student changes from one program to another at your school (e.g., from BA Psychology to BS Biology) the student must request the change and the school must report the change. When there is a change of program:

- Get a signed and dated request (VA Form 22-1995 or 22-5495) for the change from the student.
- Change the program on the student's VA-ONCE BIO page.
- If the student is already certified, amend the cert on the term the student began
 the new program. In remarks enter, "Student changed from program> and the VA standard remark "Student's Request For Change Of
 Program/Place of Training Is On File." Keep the request (VA 22-1995 or VA
 22-5495) in the student's file at your school.
- If the student hasn't been certified, certify the student and add the VA standard remark "Student's Request For Change Of Program/Place Of Training Is On File."

Enrollment Dates

A school operating on a standard semester or quarter-hour basis may certify semesters or quarters including a summer term, not to exceed one academic/school year on any one Enrollment Certification form, with some exceptions such as for servicepersons and for those training less than half-time. A standard quarter is 10-13 weeks and a standard semester is 15 to 19 weeks in length with courses beginning the first week and ending the last week, the last day of final examinations. If a course doesn't follow the standard quarter or semester format, certify the actual begin date, end date, and credit for the course(s) on a new Cert. Each quarter or semester is a new Cert. When you certify students you can certify them for one or more terms. If you prefer to certify more than one term, the student plans to attend through spring, and prior credit has been evaluated and reported, then certify the student through spring. Certify summer towards the end of spring term or after spring term quarter or semester. If a student's summer enrollment is at least half-time and eight weeks or longer, you have early fall registration, and you know the student will attend the next academic year, then you can certify the student summer through the following spring when you certify summer. If a student is <1/2-time, is on active duty, or is certified for accelerated payment, the student can only be certified one quarter or semester at a time and tuition and fees must be reported.

Credit

Report the number of credits the student will earn each quarter or semester. A distinct entry should be made for each separate period certified. If a student is certified less than <½-time or drops below ½-time, tuition and fees must be reported.

Undergraduate: Enter the exact number of credits that will be taken by period. In a standard quarter or semester:

- 12 credits or more are full-time
- 9-11 credits are 3/4-time
- 6-8 credits are ½-time
- 4-5 credits are less than <\frac{1}{2}-time
- 1-3 credits are ¼-time or less

NOTE: Full-time is 13 or 14 hours at some schools. These schools should contact their ELR about measuring training time.

Graduate:

Accredited schools report graduate (IHL_Grad) training time based on the school's academic regulations. Non-accredited schools must report graduate training time as undergraduate (IHL_Undergrad).

Course Applicability

Only credits that apply toward completion of the student's program can be certified to VA. If 12 credit hours are certified, all 12 must apply. If a student enrolls for 12 credits, but only nine credits satisfy a program requirement, then certify nine credits. A curriculum guide or graduation evaluation form should be kept in the student's file and

courses certified should be checked. Only courses that satisfy requirements outlined by the curriculum guide or graduation evaluation form can be certified for VA purposes. If a student takes a course that does not fulfill a program requirement, it can't be certified for VA purposes. There are two exceptions to the rule about course applicability:

- The last quarter or semester before graduation, all credit hours taken can be certified if one or more of the credits satisfy a graduation requirement. Last means last. There is only one last quarter or semester.
- If the college allows substitutions for program requirements, VA will allow course substitutions if the school approves them and they are documented in the student's file. Changes in credits don't have to be reported unless training time changes. If an undergraduate student is certified for 15 credits in a standard quarter or semester, for example, it isn't necessary to report a change unless applicable credits drop below 12. However, it is necessary that the school maintain an accurate record of the number of credits the student is taking at any one time during the quarter/semester.

Repeating Courses

Courses that are failed or for which the grade does not meet minimum requirements for graduation may be certified for VA purposes if they are repeated.

Courses that are successfully completed may not be certified for VA purposes if they are repeated. If students must take additional courses in order to raise their GPA to graduate, the courses must be courses that have not already been successfully completed by the student.

Remedial and Deficiency Courses

Remedial and deficiency credit should be put in the R/D column, rather than the credit column. When students have both credit and R/D credit, VA combines the credit to determine training time. R/D credit is used to correctly charge entitlement for chapter 35 students. Deficiency courses do not need to be listed in remarks. Remedial and deficiency courses are courses designed to correct deficiencies in basic mathematics, English, and reading at the elementary or secondary level. The lowa State Approving Agency (SAA) must approve remedial and deficiency courses. If approved, these courses can be certified as part of an approved program, but only for students for whom a verifiable need has been established.

Keep test results and other documents that support the need for remedial and deficiency courses in the student's file.

- Chapters 30, 32, 1606, and 1607: Entitlement is charged for remedial and deficiency training.
- Chapter 35: Entitlement is **not** charged for five months of full-time remedial and deficiency training. If a chapter 35 student is certified for six standard credits

and six remedial credits, payment is full-time, but entitlement is charged ½-time.

Practical Training

Practical training is academic training that includes actual job experience. Practical training courses must be approved by the Iowa SAA. Some practical training is only measured in clock hours—a medical residency, for example— and some practical training is measured in credit hours. When a practical training course is measured in credit hours by a school, the school can certify the course by credit hours or by clock hours, whichever is to the advantage of the student. Twelve credit hours or 18 clock hours per week is full-time.

Independent Study (Internet and Distance Learning)

Independent study is a course or program offered without regularly scheduled, conventional classroom or laboratory sessions. The courses or programs must consist of a prescribed curriculum with provision for interaction by mail, telephone (toll-free to the student), computer, or personally between the student and a regularly employed faculty member of the school. Independent study courses are paid the same as resident courses. Independent study courses and programs must be accredited and must lead to a standard college degree or certificate at an Institution of Higher Learning (IHL). Further, they must be specifically approved for VA purposes by the Iowa State Approving Agency (Iowa SAA).

Credit for Internet and distance learning courses and programs can be certified. The courses must have a defined begin and end date. Usually these dates are standard quarter and semester dates.

Submitting and Mailing Certifications

Enrollment Certifications can be submitted 120 days before the term begins, unless training time is less than ½-time, the veteran is on active duty, or accelerated payment is requested. If a student is less than ½-time, on active duty, or certified for accelerated payment the Cert must be submitted on or after the first day of class and tuition and fees must be reported.

NOTE: The St. Louis RPO adopted a "temporary" deviation that eliminates "confirmed enrollments". There will be a small number of certifications VA's computer systems can't process before the term starts. When this happens, St. Louis will hold the certification and input it after the term begins. Education claims are processed in St. Louis, Missouri. The address is:

US Department of Veterans Affairs VA Regional Office PO Box 66830 St. Louis, MO. 63166-6830 **Notice of Change in Student Status/**Amend, Adjust, and Terminate A copy of any *Notice of Change in Student Status* should be printed and put in the student's school file/folder. A *Notice of Change in Student Status* reports one of three distinct actions.

- 1. **Amend** is used to change the begin date, end date, tuition and fees, and advance pay and accelerated pay request on a certification already submitted (Status 4, 5M, or 5A).
- 2. **Adjust** is used to report an increase or decrease in credit that affects training time. If training time drops to less than ½-time, tuition and fees must be reported.
- 3. **Terminate** is used to report a complete withdrawal for an enrollment period. This applies even if they are in multiple or overlapping enrollment periods. If the student completely withdraws from one of the enrollment periods it is considered a termination for that period. VA-ONCE will give you the option to terminate subsequent periods or to leave them as previously certified.

Drops and Withdrawals

All withdrawals must be reported. Reductions do not have to be reported unless training time changes. If a student certified for 15 credits drops a course, it isn't necessary to report the change unless applicable credits drop below 12 but the school must make a note in the student's record that their credits dropped from 15 to 12. If the student then drops another three-credit, the school must report the change to ¾-time. If a reduction drops a student to <½-time, tuition and fees must be reported. Changes in tuition and fees should always be reported for students on active duty or training at <½-time even if there is no change in the actual training time. Be careful when reductions involve nonstandard enrollment periods. Caution may dictate routinely reporting all nonstandard reductions.

Before Term and First Day of Term

Adjustments

- If a student attends and withdraws from a course the first day of the term report the adjustment as a "Reduction On First Day of Term" and report the "LDA/EFF Date" as the first day of the term.
- If a student does not attend and withdraws from a course the first day of the term report the adjustment as "Pre-registered But Never Attended" and report the "LDA/EFF Date" as the last day of the previous term.

Terminations

- If a student does not start the term, report the termination reason as "Withdraw Before Beginning of Term." VA-ONCE will enter the day before the term as the "LDA/EFF Date."
- If a student attends class and then terminates the first day of the term the student should be paid for the break and for the first day. Report the termination reason as "Withdrawal During Drop Period" and report the "LDA/EFF Date" as the first day of the term.
- If a student does not attend class and terminates on the first day, the student should not be paid for the break and for the first day. Report the termination reason as "Withdraw Before Beginning Of Term." VA-ONCE will enter the day before the term as the "LDA/EFF Date."
- If a new student certified for the first time does not start the term, report the termination reason as "Withdraw Before Beginning Of Term" and report the "LDA/EFF Date" as the first day of the term.

During Drop Period

If a student withdraws during the school's drop period, identify the adjustment or termination as "During Drop Period". The drop period is the designated period at the beginning of a term when students can add and drop classes without a grade being recorded on their transcript. NOTES: (1) In VA-ONCE, put the "Drop Date" in "Standard Terms" when you add terms. (2) For VA purposes the drop date cannot be more than 30 days from the beginning date of the term. (3) If there isn't a designated drop date and the student drops during the term, report the drop as "After Drop Period" as described below.

After Drop Period

If a student withdraws after the drop period, report the adjustment or termination as "After Drop Period – Non-punitive Grades Assigned" or "After Drop Period – Punitive Grades Assigned" as appropriate. Accurately identify whether the grade assigned is nonpunitive or punitive. The action VA takes differs for nonpunitive and punitive grades. If the grade is nonpunitive Mitigating Circumstances (page 23) are an issue.

Nonpunitive Grades

A nonpunitive grade is a grade that doesn't count as earned credit and that doesn't affect progress standards for graduation. A withdrawal after the drop period is nonpunitive if it isn't calculated into the student's GPA and if it doesn't otherwise affect academic progress. Nonpunitive grades have the same effect as an audit. They don't apply to the degree and they don't affect academic progress.

Punitive Grades

A punitive grade is a grade that doesn't count as earned credit, but is used in determining a student's progress toward graduation requirements. The common punitive grade is "F". If students complete the term with punitive grades, the punitive grades do not have to be reported. If punitive grades lead to unsatisfactory progress, however, students must be terminated for Unsatisfactory Progress.

NOTES

Some schools assign "W" or "WF" grades that are calculated into GPA. A "W" or "WF" assigned 0 points and calculated into GPA has the same effect as an "F" assigned 0 points. These "W" and "WF" grades are punitive, not nonpunitive.

Mitigating Circumstances

Mitigating circumstances are circumstances beyond the student's control that prevent the student from continuing in school or that cause the student to reduce credits. Examples are:

- An illness or death in the student's immediate family.
- An illness or injury afflicting the student during the enrollment period.
- An unavoidable change in the student's conditions of employment.
- An unavoidable geographical transfer resulting from the student's employment.
- Immediate family or financial obligations beyond the control of the claimant that require him or her to suspend pursuit of the program of education to obtain employment.
- Discontinuance of the course by the school.
- Unanticipated active military service, including active duty for training.
- Unanticipated difficulties with childcare arrangements the student has made for the period during which he or she is attending classes.

When a student terminates or reduces **after** the drop period and a nonpunitive grade is assigned, mitigating circumstances are an issue. If mitigating circumstances are needed and adequate evidence of mitigating circumstances isn't received, VA will not pay for the course or courses in question. If the student has already been paid for the course or courses, VA will create an overpayment (subject to the 6-credit hour exclusion described below) from the beginning of the term. If mitigating circumstances are an issue for the adjustment or termination reason you select, VAONCE will display a Mitigating Circumstances box. The drop down arrow for the box will display the above list of mitigating circumstances.

If you know the circumstance and it's clearly one of the circumstances listed, then select that circumstance. A statement from the student concerning their mitigating circumstance should be placed in the student's record. If you don't know the student's circumstance or if you aren't sure the student's circumstance clearly meets a listed circumstance, then leave the mitigating circumstance box blank. If you leave the mitigating circumstance box blank VA will ask the student to provide evidence of a mitigating circumstance.

Six-Credit Hour Exclusion

VA automatically grants mitigating circumstances for up to six credits the first time a student reduces or terminates and mitigating circumstances must be considered. This automatic grant is called the Six-Credit Hour Exclusion. The exclusion is a **one time grant** made the first time mitigating circumstances must be considered for the student. Up to six credits can be excluded if the student has been awarded benefits for the credit. The Six-Credit Hour Exclusion cannot be granted if the student **completes** the term and receives nonpunitive grades.

- If the student withdraws from three credits, the exclusion will be granted for three credits and the student's one time exclusion is used.
- If the student withdraws from 12 credits, the exclusion will be granted for six credits, the student's one time exclusion is used, and the student must provide mitigating circumstances for the other six credits.

Nonpunitive Grades-End of Term

A nonpunitive grade is a grade that doesn't count as earned credit and that doesn't affect progress standards for graduation. Nonpunitive grades have the same effect as an audit. If a student completes the term and receives nonpunitive grades, the nonpunitive grades must be reported to VA if they change training time. An example of a nonpunitive grade is an "X" (no basis for grade), a "NP" (no pass), a "NC" (no credit) or a "U" (unsatisfactory) that does not count as earned credit and that is not calculated into the grade point average. The "LDA/EFF Date" for end of term nonpunitive grades is the end date of the term.

- If the change is an adjustment, the reason is "Student Completed Term But Nonpunitive Grades Assigned For One Or More Courses." If a student certified 12 credits receives a nonpunitive grade for a three-credit class, report the nonpunitive grade as an adjustment from 12 to nine credits.
- If the change is a termination, select "Other" or "Unsatisfactory Attendance, Conduct, or Progress" as the reason as appropriate. In remarks, report the number of nonpunitive credits. Example: "Student received six nonpunitive credits, reducing him from 12 to six credits."

NOTES

Withdrawals and incompletes may be nonpunitive, but are described elsewhere (see Drops and Withdrawals, page 21, and Incompletes, below). Grades like "P" (Pass) or "S" (Satisfactory) are not calculated into the student's grade point average, but do count as credit earned. Since these grades are earned credit, they are not nonpunitive grades that need to be reported to VA.

Incompletes

There are two procedures for incomplete grades, one for incompletes that remain permanent nonpunitive grades and another for incompletes that convert to a letter grade.

Incompletes Remain Permanent Nonpunitive Grades

Incomplete grades that will remain permanent nonpunitive grades must be reported to VA. Track incomplete grades you report to VA. If a student makes up an incomplete, report its completion to VA.

- Report incomplete(s) as an adjustment if the student receives incompletes and will continue in school as previously certified.
- Report incomplete(s) as a termination if the student doesn't continue in school or is terminated for "Unsatisfactory Attendance, Conduct, or Progress".

VA creates a one-year diary for incompletes. Unless you report incompletes as made up, at the end of the one year diary VA will assume the incomplete wasn't made up, will reduce benefits retroactively, will retroactively create an overpayment, and will ask the student for evidence of mitigating circumstances.

The one-year diary is nothing more than a control date for VA to take the actions cited. VA regulations do not limit the length of time during which a course can be completed. If your school's academic policy allows a grade to be completed after one year and it is completed after one year, report the change to VA. An incomplete doesn't need to be reported if training time isn't affected. Example: A student takes 15 credits, completes 12 credits, and receives three credits incomplete. Training time isn't affected because the incomplete doesn't reduce the student below full-time.

CAUTIONS:

- 1. If the 12 completed credit included nonpunitive grade credit, then the incomplete would affect training time.
- 2. Be careful with nonstandard enrollment period incompletes. If your school has a short deadline for making up incompletes after which they become permanent, nonpunitive grades, wait and report the incompletes as end of the term nonpunitive grades if they aren't completed. At some schools, for instance, incompletes become permanent, nonpunitive grades if not completed by the

fourth week of the following term. If this is the case, simply wait the four weeks and report the incompletes as end of the term nonpunitive grades if they aren't completed.

Incompletes Convert to a Letter Grade

Incompletes at many schools convert to an "F" or to an alternate letter grade if they are not completed by a specific date. Incompletes do not need to be reported to VA if they convert to a letter grade (A, B, C, D, F, or Pass). Incompletes **do** need to be reported as nonpunitive grades if they convert to a nonpunitive grade (e.g., NP if NP is nonpunitive). If the converted grades result in unsatisfactory progress, the student may need to be terminated for unsatisfactory progress.

Audit

Audited courses may not be certified. If the school's grading policy allows a student who registers for credit to later change to audit, report the change from credit to audit as a withdrawal, effective the day the student changed from credit to audit. Report the withdrawal as you would other withdrawals.

Unsatisfactory Progress/ Termination for Unsatisfactory Progress

Unsatisfactory Progress (Academic Suspension) must be reported to VA as a termination. Terminate the semester the student's suspended. If suspension follows fall semester, for example, terminate fall semester. Choose "Unsatisfactory Attendance, Conduct, or Progress" as the reason. VA-ONCE will insert the end date of the term as the default "LDA/EFF Date". You can change the default end of term date if it isn't the correct date. If a student successfully petitions the dismissal, is re-admitted, and is already certified the subsequent term, don't terminate the student. Instead, annotate the student's file that the student was dismissed and re-admitted following a successful appeal. If enrollment status changed the subsequent term, be sure to adjust the credit for the term. When you submit the termination a window will ask about subsequent terms if any are certified. Consider this window carefully:

- If the student won't attend the subsequent term select "Cancel". VA-ONCE will terminate the following terms.
- If you terminate a student and the student is re-admitted after your termination, certify the student as you normally would. If VA-ONCE terminated the term as described in the previous bullet, the term will have to be certified again.

Standards of progress

Schools must have and enforce adequate standards of progress. Progress standards must be approved by the Iowa State Approving Agency/Iowa Department of Education's Veterans and Military Section.

1. Progress standards should clearly define when and under what conditions a lack of progress results in suspension or dismissal.

- 2. Progress standards should not allow an indefinite probationary period without improvement. Standards that allow a student to remain in a probationary status for more than two consecutive terms without defined improvement in academic standing do not meet minimum requirements for approval.
- 3. If a school's overall standards do not meet the requirements for approval, school officials may establish a different standard specifically for VA students. These standards will be used for reporting unsatisfactory progress to VA.
- 4. Progress standards must be in the school catalog or other appropriate documentation and they must define the following:
 - The school's grading system.
 - The minimum satisfactory grade level.
 - The grade level required for graduation.
 - The specific point at which progress is unsatisfactory and a student is subject to suspension or dismissal.
 - The probationary period, if any.
 - Conditions for dismissal due to unsatisfactory conduct.
 - Conditions for a student's re-entrance following dismissal or suspension for either unsatisfactory progress or unsatisfactory conduct.

Progress records

All schools must maintain progress records (e.g., academic transcript) that clearly illustrate students' progress towards the completion of their program.

- Courses organized on a term basis must have records that show the subjects taken each term and the grade assigned at the end of the term.
- For courses not organized on a term basis, the school must establish standards that define a minimum proficiency level necessary for successful completion at given periods of time. The school must establish specific points within the course for evaluation of a student's progress toward completion.

Appeals

It's not uncommon for schools to allow students to appeal suspensions to an academic dean or to an academic review committee. Such an appellate process must be equally available to all students. That a school allows a student to remain enrolled after successful appeal of an academic suspension does not make the standards unacceptable. In these cases the school must:

- 1. Report that the student was subject to suspension but allowed to remain enrolled by appeal.
- 2. Annotate the suspension on the student's transcript or other permanent record.

- 3. Submit a Cert terminating the student effective the last day of the term in which progress was Unsatisfactory.
- 4. Submit a Cert re-enrolling the student effective the beginning of the term the student re-enrolls.
 - If the student is re-enrolling in a program other than the one from which the student was just terminated because of unsatisfactory progress, then the school should include a statement in the Cert remarks that describes the conditions for the student's continued enrollment. The conditions must describe the minimum performance standards the student must achieve during a specified period of enrollment—for example, a 1.4 grade point average by the end of the first quarter, a 1.7 grade point average by the end of the second quarter, etc.
 - If the student is re-enrolling in the same program from which the student was just terminated for unsatisfactory progress, then the school does not have to submit a statement of conditions for continued enrollment.

Policy and Procedures

SUPPLEMENTAL AND CONCURRENT ENROLLMENTS

A student may take courses at more than one school that apply to his or her degree. The school that will grant the degree is the student's "primary" school. All other schools are "secondary" schools. VA can pay benefits for courses taken at secondary schools. If the student is only enrolled at the secondary school (supplemental enrollment), VA will pay for the credits taken at the secondary school. If the student is enrolled at the primary school and the secondary school at the same time (concurrent enrollment), VA will pay for the combined credit, taking overlapping enrollment dates into account.

If You're the "Primary" School

If a student takes courses elsewhere that satisfy requirements for his or her degree at your school, then you're the primary school and the student is a "**Guest Student**" at the secondary school. Prepare a letter ("primary school letter") addressed to the VA Certifying Official at the secondary school. Email, mail (U.S. Postal Service), fax, or let the student hand carry the letter to the secondary school. Keep a copy of the letter in the student's file. The letter must:

- 1. Identify the student (name, social security number, and education chapter; file number and suffix for chapter 35) as a student at *<insert name and facility code of your school>* pursuing a *<insert name of your student's program>*.
- 2. State, "The courses listed below satisfy *<insert name of program>* requirements and will transfer at full value to *<insert name of your school>*."

- 3. List the courses the student is taking or will take at the secondary school that your school will accept as transfer credit that apply to the student's program.
- 4. State, "<Student> intends to take the above courses at <Secondary School> <Identify term, e.g., spring quarter 2005>. Please certify the course(s) to VA as the secondary school. VA data and history for both primary and secondary schools will be in VA-ONCE. Ensure a transcript is obtained from the secondary school and that transfer credit is granted, grade permitting. When a compliance survey is conducted, your records will be reviewed to see if the course applied to the student's program and to see if transfer credit was granted, grade permitting.

If You're the "Secondary" School

If a student takes courses at your school that will apply to a degree the student is pursuing elsewhere, you are the secondary school and the other school is the primary school. The student's primary school will send you a primary school letter. In VA-ONCE:

- 1. Adopt the student.
- 2. Certify the student as a "**Guest Student**". VA-ONCE will have you enter the name of the primary school. VA-ONCE will insert "Guest Student" for program, insert "NA" for credit allowed, and insert "Courses Confirmed To Be Applied To A Degree Program At <Name of primary school you entered>" in remarks.
- 3. Only certify courses listed in the primary school letter. Remember tuition and fees if the student is less than ½-time. Secondary schools must report all changes in enrollment for secondary students. Amend, adjust, and terminate Certs as you would for any VA student. VA data and history for both primary and secondary schools will be in VA-ONCE. The data and history can be seen by both the primary and the secondary school.

SAMPLE PRIMARY SCHOOL LETTER (Suggested Format)

NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL

Date

NAME AND ADDRESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL

<Student's Name (Claim Number)> is a chapter <e.g., 30> student at <Name of School (facility code)> pursuing a <Name of Program, e.g. B.S. History degree>.

The course(s) listed below satisfy < Name of Program> requirements and will transfer at full value to < Name of School>.

List course(s) by title and number

Student intends to take the above course(s) at *Secondary School> (Identify term, e.g., spring term 2011* as a guest student. Please certify the courses to VA as the secondary school.

SIGNED BY THE CERTIFYING OFFICIAL

TELEPHONE NUMBER

NOTE: Email primary school letters are fine. The email message simply needs to convey the facts outlined in the primary school instructions and a copy must be kept in the student's file by the primary school.

DUAL DEGREES and DUAL MAJORS

A student may pursue a dual degree or dual major to accomplish a single objective. For example, a student might pursue a B.S. Business degree and a B.S. Computer Science degree to become an Information Resource Manager. Dual degrees and dual majors must be approved by the Iowa SAA.

- If a dual degree or dual major is listed in your catalog or is pursued under an
 academic policy that defines the requirements for dual degrees or dual majors,
 then the dual degree or dual major may be certified to VA if the SAA has
 approved the dual degree or dual major, or the SAA has approved the policy
 under which the dual degree or dual major is pursued.
- If a dual degree or dual major is not listed in your catalog or is not defined by academic policy, then the dual degree or dual major must be approved by the SAA. This approval must be obtained even when the two separate degrees or two separate majors are approved by the SAA.

ROTC Programs

A student in an ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) program is commissioned as an officer only if he or she receives a degree. Therefore, since a degree is one of the requirements to become a commissioned officer, the objective of commissioned officer is a professional objective. A student in an ROTC scholarship program may show his or her objective to be commissioned officer. Students in a ROTC program may be certified for courses required for their degree (including electives) **and** for those required for the ROTC program.

Tutorial Assistance

Tutorial assistance may be paid to students under chapters 30, 32, 33, 35, 1606, and 1607. Tutorial assistance helps the student pay for necessary tutoring and is a supplement to the student's regular education benefit.

Overview

VA may pay tutorial assistance to a student receiving education benefits. The monthly rate may not exceed the cost of tutoring or \$100. The maximum amount payable is \$1200. There is no entitlement charge for the first \$600 under chapters 30, 32, 33, and 1606. There is no entitlement charge under chapter 35.

The student, tutor, and certifying official must complete an *Application and Enrollment Certification for Individualized Tutorial Assistance* (VA Form 22-1990t).

The application may be submitted at the end of each month or combination of months. The application must be signed and dated on or after the date of the last tutoring session certified. VA can pay for tutorial assistance during the one year period before the date VA receives the application.

Eligibility

All of the following criterion must be met for a student to be eligible for tutorial assistance.

- The student must be in a post secondary program on a ½-time or more basis.
- The student must have a deficiency in a course that is part of his or her approved program. The student must be enrolled in a course during the same quarter in which tutoring is received for that course. Tutoring may not occur between quarters or semesters.

School Certification

When a certifying official signs an Application and Enrollment Certification for Individualized Tutorial

Assistance, he or she certifies that:

- Tutoring is essential to correct a deficiency. A letter from the course instructor should be put in the student's VA file. The letter must state that the student is deficient in the course and that individual tutoring is required to correct the deficiency.
- The tutor meets the college's qualifications. Ideally, the school maintains a list
 of approved tutors. The list should indicate the subjects a tutor is qualified to
 tutor and the hourly charge. Students should be assigned a tutor from the
 approved list. A tutor may not be a close relative of the student.
- The charges do not exceed the usual charges for tutoring.
- The tutoring is given on an individual basis.

COOPERATIVE TRAINING

Colleges and universities are increasingly offering work experience or work internship programs. The term **cooperative training** (co-op) is used by VA to denote school-sponsored programs that consist of school instruction and on-the-job (OJT) training. For example, a community college may offer an A.A.S. Automotive Technology degree with course work at the college and OJT at a car dealership. Like all programs, co-op programs must be specifically approved by the lowa State Approving Agency.

Cooperative training, like some forms of practical training can be certified by credit hours or by clock hours, whichever is to the student's advantage. Examples: A student takes 12 credits at the college one quarter and 6 credits OJT (40 clock hours) at a place of business the next quarter. The student is certified 12 credits the first quarter and 40 clock hours the second quarter. The student is full-time both quarters. Co-op training may occur in two formats: alternating co-op or parallel co-op.

Alternating Co-op

The student alternates full-time school attendance with full-time OJT training. For example, a student may alternate one term of full-time school attendance with one term of full-time OJT, or a student may take a four term of classroom instruction phase and then finish a program with a one term OJT phase (internship or externship). The school and the OJT phases must be full-time.

The school and OJT phases may alternate on a weekly, monthly, or term basis. However they alternate, the school phase must be at least as long as the OJT phase. If a school phase is certified for one month, then the subsequent OJT phase cannot be more than one month. A school phase can be longer than an OJT phase, but an OJT phase can never be longer than the school phase.

Parallel Co-op

The student attends school half-time and works (OJT) half-time. For example, a student takes six classroom credits in the morning and three OJT credits (20 clock hours) in the afternoon. The combination of school and OJT must equal full-time. In this case, the student is full-time because the six classroom credits is ½-time and 20 clock hours is ½-time.

The school phase of training must be at least as long as the OJT phase of training. The student must be attending school at least half-time each day the student works OJT, but the student can't work more than four hours per day. A student could be attending school three-quarter time each day and working half-time or less, but not the other way around.

Rules for Cooperative Training

Cooperative training must be a **full-time** program. The school phase and the OJT phase together

constitute one co-op cycle. The OJT phase must be an integral part of the school's approved program.

The OJT must be supervised by school instructors, the school must arrange the OJT phases with employers, the school must arrange for the placement of individual students in the OJT, and the school must grant credit for the OJT. A VA student must elect co-op in writing. The best method is for the student to write an election statement in the "Remarks" block of the Enrollment Certification that the student signs and dates. With VA-ONCE, the school should obtain a written election statement, keep the statement in the student's school file, and enter in the Cert's remarks, "Student's written election for co-op training on file." Once a student elects co-op training, the student must complete both phases (school and OJT) of each co-op cycle. If the student finishes the first phase, starts the second phase, and drops out; an overpayment may be created back to the beginning of the first phase, to the start of the cycle. Although VA regulations require certain procedures and a specific minimum ratio of school and OJT, local and state requirements always take precedence and veterans are expected to follow the same rules and internal procedures as all other students. Sometimes this means a particular co-op program cannot be approved for veteran training because state or school rules conflict with VA regulation.

LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION TESTS

VA can reimburse the cost of licensing and certification tests approved by the State Approving Agency. Students are reimbursed the cost of the test, not to exceed the approved cost of the test or \$2,000. Benefits can be paid for tests that aren't passed, for tests retaken if not passed, and for tests required to be recertified or to renew a license. Students must be eligible for benefits to receive test reimbursement. They must have remaining entitlement and their delimiting date must not have passed. Entitlement is prorated based on the amount reimbursed. If a student's full-time benefit is \$1000 per month and the student is reimbursed \$500 for a test, then the student's remaining entitlement will be reduced by ½ month.

Information about test fee reimbursement is at www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/programs.htm#LAC. VA students can apply for test fee reimbursement by:

- Completing and submitting an Application for Reimbursement of Licensing or Certification Test Fees available at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/22-0803.pdf.
- Attaching a copy of their test results to the application. If test results aren't available they can attach a copy of their license or certification and a payment receipt. Test fee reimbursement can be paid for each test for which reimbursement is claimed and these documents are submitted. Example: A student takes the Oregon State Bar Examination. The above link explains what the student needs to do and links to WEAMS Public to find the test as follows.
 - 1. Select "Click here to go to the search feature".
 - 2. Under Search for approved License and Certification Programs click "HERE".

- 3. Select Oregon from the Map.
- 4. Select License to Practice Law in Oregon (fees up to \$525 can be reimbursed).
- 5. Select Institution Profile for the Oregon State Board of Bar Examiners' name and address. If the student takes the bar examination in other states, the student should check those states (Search for Tests) to see if the bar examination is approved for VA reimbursement in those states. There's no limit to the number of approved tests for which reimbursement can be made as long as the student has remaining entitlement to cover the cost of the test and the student isn't beyond his or her delimiting date.

NATIONAL TESTS

VA students can be reimbursed the fee charged for national admission tests and national tests for college credit. Currently the only approved tests are:

- SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) MAT (Miller Analogies Test)
- LSAT (Law School Admission Test) MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test)
- GRE (Graduate Record Exam) OAT (Optometry Admissions Testing)
- GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) PCAT (Pharmacy College Admissions Test)
- AP (Advanced Placement Exam) TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)
- CLEP (College-Level Examination Program) DSST (DANTES Subject Standardized Tests)
- DAT (Dental Admissions Test) ECE (Excelsior College Examinations)

Complete information and directions for applying for reimbursement are available on the GIBill Web site at http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/programs.htm - Testing.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION OF VA STUDENT FOLDERS

The following format for VA student folders is recommended. This format is not mandatory, but it does cover everything necessary for accurate certification. Contents should be in *chronological order*. This order will make it more convenient for anyone working with the folder.

If the information listed below is readily available through the school's automated database system, it does not have to be filed in the student's folder. The Certifying

Official must be able to access the information as required for a compliance survey or other VA inquiry.

We suggest that the Certifying Official keep copies of certifications and changes in enrollment either in paper form or electronic form for three years. It is also helpful to keep copies of all supporting documents such as the student's discharge papers (DD-214) or Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE). The original document should be sent to VA. It may be beneficial to keep a copy of notes regarding any conversations with the student.

Left Side

- Copy of student's application for admission to the school.
- Copies of transcripts from all schools previously attended and your school's transfer evaluations.
- A summary grade report of the student's progress at your facility.
- Copies of degree plans for all certified objectives with all credit posted.
- Copy of remedial and deficiency test scores and justification for any remedial and deficiency courses certified to VA.
- Course substitution form(s).
- Course elective approval(s) when applicable.
- Copies of drop slips and withdrawal forms when applicable.
- Other school documentation.

Right Side

- Copies of VA Form 22-1990 or 22-5490 if available.
- Copies of VA Form 22-1995 or 22-5495 if available.
- Copies of all enrollment certifications (VA 22-1999).
- Copies of all notices of changes in student status (VA 22-1999b).
- Copies of supporting documents (DD 214, NOBE, etc.)
- Any correspondence from the Department of Veterans Affairs, which you may have received for the student.

Retention OF VA Records

VA students' records must be kept for three years following the ending date of the last period certified to VA. Records need to be kept longer than three years **only** if a written request to keep the records longer is received from the Department of Veterans Affairs or the General Accounting Office 30 or more days before the end of the three-year period. This requirement is in the Code of Federal Regulations (38 CFR 21.4209(f)). Although VA requires that records be kept for three years, record retention regulations for individual states may require that VA records be kept more than three years.

VA-ONCE

VA-ONCE is an enhanced, electronic, alternative for submitting VA Forms 22-1999, 22-1999b, and 22-6553c in lieu of paper forms. It is a completely Internet based application.

How do I gain access to VA-ONCE?

All schools will need to complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to gain access to the VA-ONCE application. Click http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/once/mou.htm to see a copy of the MOU. You will need to complete the form on-line, PRINT it out, obtain the appropriate signature(s) and mail it to your Education Liaison Representative (ELR). If you have not recently submitted a "Designation of Certifying Official(s)" VA Form 22-8794, complete the form and mail it to your Education Liaison Representative (ELR) and mail a copy to the State Approving Agency (SAA).

Tips for Using VA-ONCE

VA-ONCE User's Guide – http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/once/documents/VAOnce_Guide.pdf

Tips for VA-ONCE – http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/once/documents/VA-Once_Tips.pdf

Update Information -

P020 - http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/once/documents/VA- Once P020 Training.pdf

P022 – http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/once/documents/VA-Once_P022_Training.pdf

P023 – http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/once/documents/VA-Once_P023_Training.pdf

P024 - http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/once/documents/VA-Once P024 Training.pdf

P025 - http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/once/documents/VA-ONCE_P025_Training.pdf

P026 - http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/once/documents/VA-ONCE_P026_Training.pdf

P027 – No link was provided for this update. VA-ONCE Training – http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/once/VAOnce_training_schedule.html

Contacting the VA For Students

Get a Written Answer to Your Question:

- Go to <u>www.gibill.va.gov</u>
- On the left hand menu, click on "Questions and Answers"
- Click on "Ask a Question & Find an Answer
- Click on the "Ask a Question" tab
- Enter your e-mail address, select your benefit chapter, and enter your subject.
- Type in your question. Be sure to include your full name and social security number or file number in the body of your message. Provide facts and be specific with your question.
- Expect a written reply in three to five working days.

Use the 1-888-442-4551 Toll-Free Number

- Dial 1-888-442-4551*
- Press 1 if you have a touch tone phone
- Press 1 for information on your MGIB-Active Duty or Selected Reserve Benefit.
- Press 1 for the amount of your last payment and the date it was processed.
- Press 2 for the date the VA mailed your monthly certification form (If mailed)
- Press 3 for the date the VA processed your last monthly certification of enrollment
- Press 4 for general information on your last education award
- Press 2 for general information on other education benefits

Press 3 to find out how to apply for benefits or where to send your application

*Note: Do not use this number to verify enrollment. Use WAVE or call 1-877-823-2378

WAVE – Web Automated Verification of Enrollment

- Submit Monthly Verification of Enrollment
- Report a Change in Enrollment (You must also notify the school)
- Change your mailing address
- Change your Direct Deposit
- View your current benefit information
- Sign up for monthly reminder messages
- Determine if your paperwork is pending (Coming Soon)

VA ON THE WEB/GI Bill Website

VA Education Service maintains a "One Stop" website (www.gibill.va.gov) that has or links to just about everything of interest to veterans and certifying officials. Give the site's address to your students. On the home page and in the menu bar you'll find:

- The home page includes a list of new, topical topics.
- GI Bill Information has a wealth of information. There's a link to VA education benefits that describes education and education related programs in detail.
 There are also links for Education Forms, VA Payment Rates, related Internet Links, and How to Apply for Benefits, both hardcopy and online.

VONAPP is the Veterans On-line Application Website. Veterans can complete and submit the Application for Education Benefits (22-1990), Request for Change of Program or Place or Training (22-1995), Application for Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (22-5490), Request for Change of Program or Place of Training (22-5495), and the application for Vocational Rehabilitation (28-1900) to VA via VONAPP.

• Information for Veterans includes a link to WAVE (Web Automated Verification of Enrollment) where Chapter 30 and 1606 students can certify their monthly enrollment Information for Veterans also has sections for returning Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve service members of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. This is also information for students who want to attend foreign schools (not to be confused with study abroad programs you may offer at your school).

- Information for Schools includes a link to the VA-ONCE website, a comprehensive site about VA-ONCE. If you need to update your Designation of Certifying Official(s) form, you can print the form from the VA-ONCE website. The form is Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF). Use Adobe Acrobat Reader to access PDF files with your web browser. If you don't have Acrobat Reader installed, a link to download the Reader is on the forms page. There's also a link for Certifying Official Information Resources where, among other things, you can download the WAVES Handbook. The link identifies the revision date of the Handbook.
- Questions & Answers links to VA's support and help site for both students
 and school officials. If school certifying officials email VA about a student the
 certifying official should use this secure site. Certifying officials can establish a
 logon at Questions and Answers that will give them priority for answers.

Helpful Names, Numbers, & Addresses DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS St. Louis REGIONAL OFFICE VARPO (VA REGIONAL PROCESSING OFFICE) P. O. BOX 66830 St. Louis, MO. 63166-6830

PHONE: 1-888-442-4551 FAX: 716-857-3192

WEBSITE: http://www.gibill.va.gov

Education Services Officer, Louise Wright
Deputy Education Service Officer, Stanton Nickens
Chief Education Liaison Officer, Marie George
Education Liaison Representative for Iowa, Kathy Mitchell

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION – NATIONWIDE PHONE: 800-827-1000 for: REIMBURSEMENTS, LOANS, GRANTS, and

ANYTHING TO DO WITH MONEY

PHONE: 877-838-2778 for: DIRECT DEPOSIT CENTRAL TO ORDER VA FORMS

AND PUBLICATIONS, CONTACT ERNEST PAGANO:

PHONE: 716-857-3391 FAX: 716-857-3396

E-mail: admepaga@vba.va.gov

Please note that most forms can be obtained at the G.I. Bill website:

http://www.gibill.va.gov

VETERANS/MILITARY EDUCATION

(Iowa State Approving Agency)

E-MAIL: <u>thomas.beasley@iowa.gov</u>

Michael.dommer@iowa.gov

Deb Taylor, 515.281.3317

WEBSITE:

www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1250< emid=2136 (Higher/Adult Education / Postsecondary Training and Support / Veterans Education)

VA Forms

Students should be encouraged to submit Application for Education Benefits and Change of Place of Training forms on VON-APP (Veterans On-Line Application) at (http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp).

VA Form 22-1990, Application for Education Benefits -

Completed by the student the first time application for benefits is made.

This form is used to apply for Chapter 30, 32, 33, 1606, and 1607 benefits. If the applicant is on active duty, Part VII must also be completed by the serviceperson's Education Services Officer.

If the student has been discharged from the service, a copy of Copy 4 of the DD Form 214 should accompany the 22-1990. If the student is active in a Reserve or Guard unit, there will not be a DD 214, but a Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE) form the unit of assignment. Do not delay sending the 22- 1990 if the student does not have these forms.

VA Form 22-1995, Request for Change of Program or Place of Training –

Used by Chapter 30, 32, 33, 1606, and 1607 veterans, servicepersons, or reservists to apply for a change of program or place of training, or to apply for re-entry into training following a report of unsatisfactory progress or conduct. It is also used for students who transfer in to the school and have previously received VA education benefits at another institution or in another training program.

VA Form 22-5490, Application for Survivors' and Dependent's Educational Assistance –

is used by first time Chapter 35 students to apply for benefits. The application is to be used by eligible spouses, surviving spouses, and children of veterans who died while on active duty or as a result of a service-connected condition and dependents of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected condition. Dependents of veterans have a different VA file number than their Social Security Number. It is the VA file (claim) number of the veteran that is used by the VA to process claims.

VA Form 22-5495, Request for Change of Program or Place of Training (Survivors' and Dependents Educational Assistance) –

is used by dependents that are changing their program or school. Chapter 35 students have a VA file (claim) number that is not their Social Security Number, but the file (claim) number of the veteran whose death or disability gives them their eligibility.

VA Form 22-1999, Certification of Enrollment –

is used by the Certifying Official to tell the VA about a student's enrollment. It includes the dates of enrollment, credit or clock hours, prior credit, type of training, and name of program. This is used for all students except Chapter 31. Enrollment certifications submitted in VA-ONCE are considered VA Forms 22-1999.

VA Form 22-1999b, Notice of Change in Student Status, is used to notify the VA of any change in a student's enrollment –

adding or dropping courses that change the student's status. This form is used for all students except Chapter 31. VA Forms 22-1999b submitted in VA-ONCE are considered the same as the paper.

Military Forms

DD 214 Certificate of Release or Discharge From Active Duty -

The DD 214 is the veteran's discharge or separation document. Member Copy 4 shows the individual's type of discharge and reason for discharge. A copy of Member Copy 4 should be forwarded to the VA with a discharged or separated student's VA From 22-1990.

DD 2384 Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE) -

This is a temporary eligibility certificate which is issued to individuals in the active Selected Reserves or National Guard who have established eligibility for Chapter 1606, but whose computer record has not yet been updated to show the eligibility. NOBE's are only valid for 120 days from date of eligibility.

Glossary

Accelerated Payment

An accelerated payment is a 60% lump sum payment of tuition and fees for high cost, high technology programs. The payment is in lieu of regular chapter 30 benefits and is payable only if tuition and fees exceed 200% of what would normally be payable under chapter 30 for a given enrollment period. (See Accelerated Payment, page eight)

Active Duty

Full-time duty in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Does not include Active duty for training in the Reserves or National Guard. (See below).

Active Duty for Training (ACDUTRA) or (ADT)

Active duty for training in the Reserves or National Guard. This includes selected reservists on full-time duty for training purposes in the Armed Forces; members of the National Guard or Air National Guard of any state, performing full-time training duty under title 32, U.S. Code, sections 316, 502, 503, 504, or 505.

Advance Payment

The monetary allowance which may be payable to a student for the first (fractional or full) and second full month of enrollment. Advance payment must be requested by the student. These payments are mailed to schools prior to the beginning of classes for release to students who have completed registration. (See Advance Payment, page eight)

Award Letter

The official written notice from the Department of Veterans Affairs to a student of his or her monthly rate of payment, the inclusive dates of payment, delimiting date, and remaining entitlement at the end of the award period. **An award letter is sent to a VA student whenever VA awards or changes the student's education benefit.** The award letter is a good source of information for financial aid purposes.

Break Pay (Interval Pay)

Educational assistance benefits may be paid during the intervals between terms at a school or between terms when transferring from one school to another while remaining in the same program. Exceptions apply, as well as certain other restrictions in certain situations. Persons on active duty or training at less than half-time are not entitled to interval payments. (See Break Pay, page ten)

Certificate of Eligibility (COE or C/E)

A Form 22-1993a which is issued to an applicant showing approval to pursue a stated program of education at a particular institution, the remaining entitlement of the student, and the ending date of the student's eligibility. A C/E is only valid at the institution named and only for the program objective indicated.

Change of Program

A change of program consists of a change in the educational, professional, or vocational objective for which the veteran or eligible person entered training and a like change in the type of courses required to attain a new objective. This includes any change in an eligible person's program or objective which will result in a material loss of credit or which will materially lengthen the training time necessary to complete an objective. A material loss of credit is generally considered to be the loss of more than 12 credit hours for programs measured in quarter or semester hours, or the loss of more than 10 percent of the training completed for other types of courses. A change of program is **NOT** charged if a claimant **completes** one program, then begins a totally different objective.

DD Form 214

The Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty that is prepared at the time an individual completes a period of active duty in one of the Armed Forces. Veterans should be advised to submit copy number 4 of their DD Form 214 with a claim for VA benefits. A certified copy may also be submitted.

Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA)

The state level agency representing Iowa's veteran population. The mission of IDVA is to serve veterans and families. We are dedicated to ensuring Iowa veterans and their dependents receive the full measure of county, state, and federal benefits to which they are entitled. We are committed to helping our newest veterans with successful reintegration into civilian life. Iowa possesses an intricate network of individuals dedicated to serving veterans. Each of our counties has a Commissioner of Veterans Affairs and a County Director. This is the first point of contact, and we urge veterans to contact their county office. The IDVA also has benefits specialists that assist veterans with a variety of services.

US Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA or VA)

The federal Department of Veterans Affairs which provides various benefits to veterans.

Delimiting Date

The first day after a claimant's period of eligibility expires. Benefits are not payable on or after the delimiting date. Generally, the delimiting date is ten years and one day from the veteran's last release from active duty date (RAD). Chapter 1606 is ten years from the date of eligibility if eligibility was established before October 1, 1992, and 14 years after October 1, 1992. The expiration date for those under Chapters 35 is computed differently. Delimiting dates can be extended for those who were ordered to active duty as a member of the Selected Reserves or National Guard.

Drop Period

A brief period at the beginning of a term officially designated by a school for dropping courses without **academic** penalty. The school's last day to drop a course will be the end of the drop period, providing it does not exceed 30 days from the first day of the term.

Dual Eligibility

Entitlement to education benefits under two or more programs administered by VA. If an individual qualifies for educational assistance under two or more such programs, the total assistance available may not exceed 48 months, or the equivalent in part-time benefits. A person having dual eligibility may not receive such benefits concurrently.

National Guard Education Assistance Program (NGEAP)

This program provides tuition assistance for students who enter a six-year service commitment with the Iowa National Guard. The program is jointly administered by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission and the Iowa National Guard.

Eligible Person

A child, spouse, or surviving spouse of a veteran who served on active duty and who died on active duty, or who died of a service-connected disability, or who has a total disability permanent in nature resulting from a service-connected disability, or who died from any cause while a total and permanent service-connected disability was in existence. Also includes a child or a spouse of a person who is on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces and who now is, and, for a period of more than 90 days, has been, listed by the Secretary concerned as missing in action, captured in line of duty by a hostile force, or forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.

Enrollment Period

This term means an interval of time during which a veteran or eligible person is enrolled in an educational institution and is pursuing his or her program of education. This term applies to each unit course or subject in the veteran's or eligible person's program of education; i.e., quarter, semester, or full school year.

Entitlement

The number of months the student will be eligible for VA education benefits. This is usually expressed in the numbers of months and days the student will be eligible for full-time benefits, or the equivalent in part-time training, but also may be expressed in a dollar amount. Entitlement will vary depending on the education law the individual qualifies under. In no event will entitlement exceed 48 months under any combination of laws.

Facility Code

The numerical code assigned by VA to an institution specifically identifying it or one of its subdivisions.

File Number

A seven, eight or nine-digit number assigned by VA to identify a claimant's records. The Social Security Number (SSN) is the VA file number for most veterans. If a veteran was assigned an old seven or eight digit file number, the veteran's SSN will cross reference the seven or eight digit file number.

VA assigns a suffix to the veteran's file number ("10" or "W", spouse or surviving spouse, "41" or "A", first child to apply, "42" or "B", second child to apply, "43" or "C" third child . . .) to identify the records of an individual eligible for chapter 35 benefits.

A dependent's SSN will not cross-reference a veteran's record. To access a dependent's record, the file number of the veteran must be provided.

Independent Study

A course or subject offered without any regularly scheduled, conventional classroom or laboratory sessions. For VA purposes, such courses or subjects must be accredited and lead to a standard college degree and consist of a prescribed program of study with provision for interaction either by mail, telephone, computer/Internet, or personally between the student and the regularly employed faculty of the university or college. A specific approval of these courses by the lowa State Approving Agency is required in order for VA benefits to be authorized.

Interval Payment (See Break Pay)

Kicker

Additional money added to an individual's education fund by the Department of Defense to encourage enlistment or retention in the Armed Forces. The kicker is added to the individual's normal education benefit. Kickers are used for chapters 30 and 1606. Individuals who become eligible for Chapter 1607 may receive kickers from their former benefit.

NOBE

Members of the Selected Reserve are given a Notice of Basic Eligibility (DD Form 2384, commonly referred to as a NOBE, pronounced *no-be*) by their National Guard or Reserve unit stating they are eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill—Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606).

The primary source VA uses to establish chapter 1606 eligibility is a Department of Defense (DOD) computer link, the chapter 1606 DOD Data Record. The NOBE is an alternative or supplemental document for establishing eligibility that's primarily used to verify eligibility for 120 days after the date it's issued. If you receive a NOBE from the student filing an original application for chapter 1606 send VA a copy of the NOBE when you certify the student.

Nonpunitive Grade

A nonpunitive grade is a grade that (1) doesn't count as earned credit and that (2) doesn't affect progress standards for graduation. If a student completes the term and receives nonpunitive grades, the nonpunitive grades must be reported to VA if they change training time. An example of a nonpunitive grade is a "X" (no basis for grade), a "NP" (no pass), or a "U" (unsatisfactory) that doesn't count as earned credit and that isn't calculated into the student's grade point average. Grades such as P (Pass) or S

(Satisfactory) aren't calculated into a student's grade point average, **but** they are counted as earned credit for graduation requirements. Since they count as earned credit towards completion of the student's program, they aren't nonpunitive.

OLAF (On-Line Approval File)

VA computer program that lists information and programs for approved schools and facilities nationwide.

Punitive Grade

A punitive grade is a grade that doesn't count as earned credit, but is used in determining a student's progress toward graduation requirements. Nonpunitive Grade is defined above.

Reporting Fee

VA pays an annual reporting fee to schools. This fee is intended to help defray the cost of processing VA certifications. The annual reporting fee is based on the number of VA students, including chapter 31 (Vocational Rehabilitation), certified by the school during the calendar year. The fee is \$7 (\$11 if advance pay request was processed) for each student. The reporting fee is paid as soon as possible after the end of the calendar year.

Selected Reserve

The term means, with respect to the Armed Forces, the Army Reserve, the Naval Reserve, the Marine Corps Reserve, the Air Force Reserve, the Coast Guard Reserve, the Army National Guard of the United States, and the Air National Guard of the United States.

State Approving Agency (SAA), Iowa State Approving Agency

An agency appointed by the Chief Executive of a state to approve institutional programs of education and training for payment of benefits under the various laws administered by VA.

Summer Session

A division of the summer term specifically designated in a school catalog as a distinct period of instruction. These sessions vary in length, and are often only 3-8 weeks long.

Summer Term

The total instruction offered by a school between the end of the spring term and the beginning of the fall term. A summer term may consist of several summer sessions.

Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance

The benefits payable to eligible dependents or survivors of veterans. It is often abbreviated simply as DEA (Chapter 35).

Tuition Assistance (TA)

A Department of Defense program provides up to \$4,500 of tuition assistance per fiscal year to selected members of military organizations. Tuition Assistance is managed by

the Defense Activity for Non Traditional Education Support (DANTES) under the provisions of Voluntary Education. Each service organization participating in Tuition Assistance can determine the criteria for eligibility. Military students interested in this program should be directed to consult with their military organization, DANTES, or GO ARMY ED. Schools wanting to participate in tuition assistance (TA) must have a signed MOU indicting the payment received will be applied to the military members cost of tuition.

Tuition and Fees

The term "tuition and fees" means the total cost for tuition and fees for a course a school charges all students whose circumstances are similar to veterans enrolled in the same course. "Tuition and fees" does **not** include the cost of supplies or books that the student is required to purchase at his or her own expense.

VA-ONCE

Internet based application used by schools to prepare enrollment certifications and notices of change in student status. Information about VA-ONCE is available at www.gibill.va.gov/once.

VEAP

Refers to the Veterans' Educational Assistance program, Chapter 32 of title 38, U.S. Code. This is the contributory education benefits program for post-Vietnam era veterans.

WAVE (Web Automated Verification of Enrollment)

WAVE is an Internet program used by Chapter 30 and 1606 students to verify their enrollment. Verification is required monthly. Students can also use WAVE to change their address and direct deposit information.

WEAMS

WEAMS (Web Enabled Approval Management System) is the central application VA uses to store school, organization, and program approval information. Education Liaison Representatives (ELRs) and VACO personnel enter the approval information. VA personnel use the approval information to verify schools and programs are approved. An abbreviated version of WEAMS is available on the Internet to everyone at http://inquiry.vba.va.gov/weamspub/buildSearchInstitutionCriteria.do.

Acronyms

ADT Active Duty for Training

AGR Active Guard/Reserve

DD Department of Defense

DEA Dependent's Education Assistance (Chapter 35)

DMVA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (PA)

DVA Department of Veterans Affairs

EAP Education Assistance Program

ECAP Electronic Certification Automated Program

ECSS Education Compliance Survey Specialist

ELR Education Liaison Representative

ESO Education Services Officer

FAFSA Free Application of Federal Student Aid

FTA Federal Tuition Assistance

IADT Initial Active Duty Training

IHL Institution of Higher Learning

MGIB Montgomery G I Bill

MGIB-AD Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty (Chapter 30)

MGIB-SR Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606)

NCD Non-College Degree

NDAA National Defense Authorization Act

NOBE Notice of Basic Eligibility (DD Form 2384)

REAP Reserve Education Assistance Program (Chapter 1607)

RPO Regional Processing Office

SAA State Approving Agency

SSHE State System of High Education

SSN Social Security Number

TA Tuition Assistance

TIMS The Image Management System

VA Veterans Affairs

VA-ONCE VA-On-Line Certification of Enrollment

VCE Veterans Claims Examiner

VEAP Veterans Education Assistance Program (Chapter 32)

Voc Rehab Vocational Rehabilitation (Chapter 31)

WAVE Web Automated Verification of Enrollment

WEAMS Web Enabled Approval Management System

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